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STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 25 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement in support of renewing multilateralism issued in New York on 25 September 1996 by the sixteen Heads of State or Government from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sweden.

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 48, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Peter OSVALD
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Sweden
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Statement in support of renewing multilateralism issued in New York on 25 September 1996 by sixteen Heads of State or Government

We, the Heads of State or Government from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sweden, joined on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to express our support for global cooperation. We shared the view of many Governments and civic organizations that this was the opportunity to enable the world Organization to respond to the present expectations and future needs of the world's people.

As the fifty-first session of the General Assembly opens, we have to look truth in the eye: the hopes we shared have not been fulfilled. Despite some progress, we are far from a breakthrough, in fact, unilateral actions, a deteriorating membership morale and even a decline in the commitment to obligations under the Charter of the United Nations have continued to undermine international cooperation. If the gap between the cooperation we have and the one we need continues to widen, multilateralism will be threatened at its core. Member countries need urgently to agree on a reform course to make the United Nations meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Our concern for multilateralism goes beyond the United Nations itself. Regional cooperation, for example, is crucial to strengthening global cooperation. Without a stronger United Nations, however, other forms of international cooperation will lack coherence. We emphatically reject any notion that world cooperation can meet the needs and expectations of people without a stronger United Nations.

We are deeply concerned over the lack of progress, both pace and scope, of multilateral renewal. Either nations move forward to reform and strengthen the United Nations system, or we risk having to face weakened solidarity, more unilateralism and perhaps conflict and overt disregard of international law and common values.

We see the need for a concerted political impetus to ensure that comprehensive reform is achieved within a reasonable time-frame. We urge nations to redouble their efforts to ensure a successful conclusion to negotiations going on within the United Nations.

We call for decisive action:

- To prevent conflict, resolve crises and bring security;

- To support economic growth and integration, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty;

- To promote democracy, human rights and the respect for international law;

- To make the United Nations more effective, efficient and representative.

All countries, without exception, must pay their assessed dues in full, on time and without conditions. Furthermore, the financing of global cooperation in the economic and social fields needs to be assured throughout the multilateral system.

We urge nations to rise from immediate concerns, focus on their common long-term interests and break new ground. Constructive initiatives to bring such a process in motion are needed. We, on our part, will step up our efforts to help reform, strengthen and renew multilateral cooperation.